



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CONNECTICUT, INC.®

1890 Dixwell Avenue, Suite 203  
Hamden, CT 06514-3183

203-288-7996 Fax 203-288-7998 [www.lwvct.org](http://www.lwvct.org)

## **CGA Government Administration and Elections Committee**

**March 10, 2014 Public Hearing**

**Testimony Submitted by Christine S. Horrigan, Government Chair**

### **Support for:**

#### **House Bill 5480**

**AAC REGISTRARS OF VOTERS, THE AUTHORITY OF THE SECRETARY OF THE  
STATE AND THE STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION, AND THE  
POSTING OF REQUIREMENTS FOR VOTER IDENTIFICATION**

#### **House Bill 5492**

**AAC A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT FOR THE USE OF ELECTRONIC  
EQUIPMENT FOR CONDUCTING AUDITS**

### **Opposition to:**

#### **Senate Bill 348**

**AAC POST-ELECTION AUDITS**

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut is a statewide organization with over 1600 members committed to effective public policy and the active involvement of citizens in their government. We appreciate the opportunity to submit comments on some of the election-related bills before you today.

***HB 5480 – AAC Registrars of Voters, the Authority of the Secretary of the State and the State Elections Enforcement Commission, and the Posting of Requirements for Voter Identification***

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut believes that the political process must be open to all citizens and that the right to vote with confidence in the election process must be guaranteed to all. To achieve these goals, the LWVCT supports, among other things, mandatory supervision of all election workers to assure uniform compliance with federal and state laws, the adoption of procedures to minimize voter inconvenience and identification of voters at the polls to prevent fraud.

The League supports the common sense reforms contained in HB 5480. We believe that it is imperative that towns provide Internet services to the offices of registrars of voters in order to minimize voter inconvenience and facilitate Election Day registration and election night reporting, among other things. We also believe that declaratory rulings, instructions and/or opinions issued by the Secretary of the State that are properly labeled as such should be binding upon registrars and enforceable by the State Elections Enforcement Commission in order to ensure consistency and accountability in the electoral process. Posting identification requirements near the checkers is a simple reform that will help elections run more smoothly. Please vote "YES" on HB 5480.

### **SB 348 – AAC Post-Election Audits**

The League believes that voting systems must be secure, accurate, recountable, accessible and transparent (SARAT). Connecticut's current law requires officials to perform manual post-election audits of machine-counted ballots in a randomly selected 10% of the state's voting districts after each election. The purpose of this law is to assure the integrity of our elections, to reassure voters as to the accuracy of election results, and to safeguard our elections against programming errors, malfeasance, machine malfunction, tampering and fraud.

While the League believes in efficient and economical government, we *strongly oppose* SB 348, which would substitute machine based audits using voting tabulators for the current system of manual audits, reduce the number of voting districts that are audited and limit the number of districts in a municipality that could be selected for audit to three, for the following reasons:

- We believe that running the ballots through an alternate (back-up) machine with a memory card that has been programmed at the same time in the same way with the same coding on it as the original card is essentially meaningless. This process simply repeats whatever errors might have originally been involved. As noted in the LWVUS' *Report of the Election Audits Task Force*, "[a]n audit count that simply repeated the original counting procedure, whether electronically or by hand, would add little value to the election-validation process."
- While there may be secure and accurate ways of using another machine to audit a voting tabulator, the proposed legislation does not contain safeguards, such as independent testing of memory cards and clear chain-of-custody requirements for all critical audit components such as ballots, memory cards, moderator reports, etc., to reassure us that this so.
- Placing a cap on the number of districts (3) that can be audited from the same town puts an unfair burden on smaller/medium-sized towns that tend to have larger voting districts (therefore more ballots to count) than our cities have.
- Implementation of our current audit procedures needs improvement.

Our current audit law is a check on the accuracy of our voting equipment--at a time when checks-and-balances in elections are increasingly important. Please vote "NO" on SB 348.

### **HB 5492 - AAC A Demonstration Project for the Use of Electronic Equipment for Conducting Audits**

While the League strongly opposes SB 348, we believe that reviewing Connecticut's election laws must be a continuing activity in light of evolving technology and are willing to consider a broad range of technology options that meet the SARAT criteria outlined above. Accordingly, we support HB 5492 which would permit the Secretary of the State to authorize, in consultation and coordination with the University of Connecticut, as a demonstration project, the use of electronic auditing equipment in at least three towns and require her to report back on the demonstration project to the committee of cognizance. We believe that this type of limited demonstration project, involving machines other than the standard voting tabulators, may provide important information regarding audit procedures and alternatives to the required manual audits while maintaining the integrity of the overall audit of the 2014 election. Please vote "YES" on HB 5492.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on these bills.